



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## FICTILE IVORIES

In the long North Corridor of the Museum will be found a series of cases containing the large collection of fictile ivories. These specimens of reproductive art, obtained from the Arundel Society of London, are faithful copies, in plaster, of originals famous in the world of art and to some slighter degree, perhaps, in the world of history itself. The originals are widely scattered in museums and private treasuries throughout Europe, so difficult of access, many of them, as to be wholly unavailable for comparative study. The value, therefore, of such a collection as this will readily be seen.

Ivory, in classical and mediæval times, was chiefly obtained from the tusks of the two species of elephant; but in Scandinavian countries and in Germany during the 9th and 10th centuries walrus ivory was most in use. Many ivory plaques, still in existence, are so large as to warrant the suggestion that mastodon ivory was also employed, although no fossil tusk has yet been found large enough to furnish slabs of the size required for some of the larger plaques. One specimen, indeed, in the British Museum, measures sixteen inches by five and one-half. It has been suggested that the ancients had some secret method of softening, bending and flattening ivory, and, for that matter, several recipes have been discovered in old manuscripts. All experiment thus far, however, has proved futile.



LEAF OF DIPTYCH  
Byzantine, A. D. 517.  
Original in the K<sup>u</sup>nst-  
kammer, Berlin

That the world possesses an ivory-sculptured history of art from the 2d to the 15th centuries, is due partly to durability of the substance itself, partly to its inconvertible character which prevented its being transmuted into bullion, and partly to the portability of many of the specimens, which were so small as to be readily carried and concealed about the person. Thus through many centuries these carvings escaped the greed of the barbarians and the unappeasable fury of the iconoclasts.

Before the 7th century the ivories considered most important are the imperial or consular diptychs. The term diptych meant in its original usage a flat folding "tabula" or tablet carved on one side and coated on the other with wax, prepared smoothly, to be written upon with a pointed instrument or "stylus." When the hinged halves of the diptych were folded together, the wax with its inscriptions was then protected from injury. Sometimes the tablets were of three leaves; they were then called triptychs. From the time of the emperors, it was the custom for a newly elected consul to make commemorative gifts of ivory diptychs

to his friends and to the governors of provinces. Upon the consular diptych is usually to be found a figure of the consul himself, ceremonially arrayed in full vestments, and identified by an inscription detailing his various names and titles. Sometimes there can also be found a representation of the games with which the consul entertained the people in honor of his election. The illustration here given represents Anastasius, Consul of the East, A. D. 517, arrayed

in full imperial insignia, while below is a tableau figuring men thrown to bears in the amphitheatre. The inscription reads: "FLavius. ANASTASIUS. PAULus. PROBUS. SAVINIANUS. POMPEius. ANASTAsius." In the rigidity of the figure and in the elaborate ornamentation may be traced the beginnings of the Byzantine style.

With the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire the consul diplomatically sent gifts of diptychs to each of the bishops, who placed them upon the church altars and duly recommended the donor to the prayers of the people. Thus it was that the imperial diptych, a symbol of temporal power, became the ecclesiastical diptych, a symbol of spiritual grace. In the application of the consular diptych to liturgical usage, we sometimes find that the head of the consul, adroitly modified, is made to appear with the clerical tonsure; or the consul's name may even be obliterated and a saint's inserted. Such palimpsests, however, are quite rare.

Upon the ecclesiastical diptych was inscribed the names of the newly baptised, the sainted and martyred, the faithful, both dead and living, of the clergy and laity. The subjects which adorned these later diptychs were mainly scriptural. In the old Ambrosian rite for the Church of Milan, we find that diptychs are ordered to be exposed to the people for the purpose of instilling piety. After the fall of the empire they were used for book covers, gospel covers and evangeliaries. Under the persecutions of the iconoclastic emperors,



ECCLESIASTICAL TRIPTYCH  
Original in the Bodleian Library, Oxford



PANEL  
Rhenish. Eleventh Century. The Birth of Christ.  
Original in South Kensington Museum

portable ivory plaques, devotional tablets, triptychs, images and reliquaries were in daily use by the crusader and the pilgrim.

During the rage of Muhammadanism in the 8th century, the West gained greatly in its sculpture through the influx of fugitive workmen, while art in the East naturally declined. We now find the passion and triumph of Christ, which heretofore had been but symbolically and traditionally rendered, newly

treated with singular power and force. In the Carolingian period ivory was largely employed for retables, episcopal combs, caskets, pyxes and for the handles of flabella.



MIRROR CASE

French. Fourteenth Century. Combat of Armed Knights.  
Original in South Kensington Museum

Until the close of the 13th century the artist drew his inspiration from religious and legendary themes alone. In the century following we find romance and legend, the sacred and the profane, blending curiously. The Romance of the Rose, the marvelous Arthurian legends, the Spanish and Portuguese heroic poetry, furnished a new and rich store of imagery and suggestion, and the artist so long trammelled by the conventions of previous ages, was free to find his subjects in human life. Ivory at this period was employed for many articles in domestic life—caskets, coffers, horns, mirror cases and book covers. The Siege of the Castle of Love, knights tilting, hawking or flirting, or playing at chess, are sculptured with lightness, gaiety and exquisite art.

M. E. DAWSON.



## TAPESTRY—The Making

(FIRST PAPER)

The "Standard Dictionary" gives: "Tapestry . . . 1. A textile fabric in which the woof is supplied by a spindle instead of a shuttle, the design being formed by stitches across the warp." The spindle or bobbin used by tapestry-makers is "a slender spool to hold weft or thread." A shuttle is a "boat-shaped wooden carriage, enclosing a bobbin" . . . "to carry the weft-thread or filling to and fro between the warp-threads or chain," in mechanical weaving, but is not used in tapestry-making. The warp, a good old Anglo-Saxon word, is the wall or sheet of cotton or linen threads which forms the skeleton of the tapestry. The weft, woof or filling is the colored threads from the bobbin, wool or occasionally silk, which, passed through the alternate threads of the warp, at right angles to it, complete the material and form the design; the warp itself being entirely concealed.

The needle plays no part in real tapestry, except for repairs, or, in rare cases, to embroider a design on the already finished material. Yet, so loosely do we use the word, that the "Bayeux Tapestry," the most interesting and the longest piece in the world, is not tapestry at all but embroidery, called in its day, last quarter of the 11th century, "Sarrazinois." The very fine reproduction of it in the Museum well repays careful study.